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SUBJECT: USAID ADMINISTRATOR AND DFA HENRIETTA FORE'S MEETING WITH
NORTH KIVU GOVERNOR JULIEN PALUKU

11. Summary: USAID Administrator and U.S. Director of Foreign Assistance Henrietta Fore and North Kivu Governor Julien Paluku reviewed provincial development issues March 15 in Goma. Paluku emphasized the need for capacity building at all levels of government to help meet the population's high expectations for the democratic process. He advocated job creation, adequate reintegration programs for ex-combatants and investments in infrastructure. Administrator Fore underscored U.S. support for the peace process and urged the governor to speak out against violence against women and work to eliminate rape and gender-based violence. End summary.

12. USAID Administrator and U.S. Director of Foreign Assistance Henrietta H. Fore's discussions with North Kivu Governor Julien Paluku March 15 in Goma focused on the peace process in Eastern Congo and provincial development issues, particularly North Kivu's new democratic institutions. Fore was accompanied by USAID Assistant Administrator for Africa Katherine Almquist, the Ambassador, Mission Director Steve Haykin, Goma Liaison Officer Willet Weeks and Special Assistant Wesley Wilson. Paluku was joined by Vice Governor Feller Lutaichierwa, Provincial Assembly President Leon Bariyanga and the provincial Minister of Plan.

13. Administrator Fore expressed condolences over the recent death of one of the Senators from North Kivu, Cyprien Rwakabuba. She emphasized the U.S. Government's commitment to supporting the peace process for Eastern Congo and asked the Governor for his views on how the U.S. might best support the development and the economy of North Kivu.

14. Paluku thanked USAID for support it has provided to the provincial government and to the governor's office. The United States has assisted the government and assembly with technical expertise, logistics and commodity support to provide new officials with the tools needed to improve public service and promote good governance.

15. Paluku stressed the need to strengthen government at both national and local levels. He observed that key services such as justice and security do not exist. He said the North Kivu Provincial Assembly needs capacity building to help its members address the changed political environment following 2006 elections. He noted that Congolese have high expectations of the democratic process, yet ethnic differences continue to dominate political life in the province.

16. Paluku emphasized the importance of developing projects that generate jobs. In particular, he underscored the infrastructure and transportation challenges which have hindered development of the

agriculture sector.

¶7. Paluku noted that the Joint Commission charged with implementing the Goma accords will also include subcommissions on military and on social and humanitarian affairs. The military subcommission will focus on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of armed groups. Ex-combatants who decide to return home will need an adequate resettlement package. He asserted that the former national DDR program administered by Conader had failed, and called for future programming to include adequate reintegration resources. Paluku said the UN stabilization plan must support this process with infrastructure and resources.

¶8. Vice Governor Feller Lutaichierwa also stressed the importance of infrastructure projects in North Kivu. He thanked the United States and the international community for their support during the elections, but regretted that the elected government was established before the security services had been reformed. He also thanked the United States for helping bring CNDP into the peace process.

¶9. Provincial Assembly President Leon Bariyanga said the DRC's conflicts created a culture of violence. He emphasized that putting an end to this violence is one of the provincial government's top priorities. He cited peace and security, and strengthening the judicial system to end impunity for perpetrators of violent acts, as critical objectives.

¶10. The provincial Minister of Plan thanked the Administrator and USAID for having provided assistance to the provincial government and expressed its favorable sentiments toward the United States. He stressed that the provincial government is a new institution and, with appropriate support, hopes to realize people's expectations for government services.

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¶10. In closing the meeting, Administrator Fore urged Paluku to speak out about the need for men to treat women with dignity and eliminate rape and domestic violence. He said that addressing sexual and gender-based violence is a daily struggle and he raises the issue of violence against women at every opportunity.

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